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ATTACHMENT II

Problems of French Indochina

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note: The following editorial appeared in the Kuo Fang Hsin Pao, "National Defense Semi-Monthly" on 16 January 1947. The article was written by General HUANG Ch'ian (黃 卓 賢). The note preceding the editorial, written by the editor of the magazine is as follows: "After V-J Day, General HUANG was appointed to accept the Japanese surrender in French Indochina. As head of the Chinese take-over mission, he had close connections with both the French and Vietnamese authorities. General HUANG is a French returned student, and is considered an expert on French and Vietnamese affairs. In this article, he gives a balanced view of both the French and Vietnamese side of the question."

"As I spent a number of years in Indochina during and after the war, TSENG Chih-fu (曾 道 夫), editor-in-chief of the "National Defense Semi-Monthly" has asked me to write something on "Problems of French Indochina." Being a military man, I am no good in writing.

It is known to the public that the present critical situation existing in French Indochina resulted from the battle for the Customs. The clash first started at Haiphong, later spread to Hanoi, and now it is extended all over French Indochina. As a result, our overseas nationals in Indochina have suffered heavy casualties, in addition to the loss of their properties which amounted to 200,000,000 piastres.

As Indochina borders on China and, besides, several hundred thousand of our fellow countrymen reside there, our people have made numerous suggestions for their protection. Some have suggested that troops be sent to Indochina, others have called for strong diplomatic action, and still others asked that high officials be sent to Indochina for negotiations. All these suggestions have reflected the sympathy of our people for their fellow countrymen.

Now, if we want to have a thorough understanding of the situation we must first study the history of the persons behind the scene.

D'Argenlieu and Ho Chi Minh are leaders of the French and the Vietnamese respectively in the present issue. There are many points of similarity in their personality and past experience. Even their philosophy of life is quite similar. Naturally they take different views of the present question, and it is difficult for me to make a comment on that. However, we know that circumstance creates heroes and heroes also create circumstance. The circumstances of their rise to heroism differ in the two cases.

D'Argenlieu, 60 year old French chief executive officer in Indochina, started his career in the navy. He was a junior naval officer in the First World War, and is now ruler of Indochina. As a hero he has outstanding characteristics. After the First World War he became a monk. (The monastery he entered was different from others in that once a person entered it, he was separated from the world for the rest of his life.) Life in the monastery was very strict. After having been a monk for 19 years, in August 1939 he was appointed a captain in the navy in the Second World War. He did very good service, but was captured at the fall of Cherbourg. He managed to escape to England where he was appointed by General De Gaulle as a liaison officer in the Southern Pacific. After the American forces landed in North Africa, d'Argenlieu resumed his duties as a captain in the French Navy, and performed meritorious service. While serving in the Mediterranean Sea, he sank quite a number of Italian convoys. After the European war ended, he again entered the monastery. However, he was again called upon by the New French Government to serve as Chief French Executive in Indochina.

He is friendly, has a moderate temper, and is a typical warrior. The day he arrived in Indochina he carried nothing except his luggage and saw the French and British troops fight against the Vietnamese forces. The first thing he did was to negotiate with Ho Chi Minh in an effort to satisfy the aims of the Vietnamese revolutionaries by giving them autonomy.

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Like most revolutionists, the President of Vietnam uses an alias, Ho Chi Minh. Ho's true name is Nguyen Ai Quoc. This old fighter was born in 1887 and is also 60 years old. He is leader of the Annamese Communists. Although he has been away from Vietnam for a long time, he still looks like a typical Annamite, with short hair and a long beard. He is a hardworking man who dresses simply. He has a khaki uniform which he wears the whole year round, a pair of cloth shoes and a cork hat. He is friendly and has a mild temper. These are probably the necessary qualities of being a great leader. His wife died long ago and he has never remarried. He has no children. During the Kuomintang northern expedition, he served as clerk and translator to a Russian advisor by the name of Borodin. He also spend quite a number of years in Kwangtung and knows Chinese, English, French and Russian. He is a great orator and when he speaks, he carries no manuscript. On 22 March 1946 I heard him speak at a meeting of welcome to General Leclerc. He spoke such fluent French that the French, British and American military delegations in the audience were amazed. He also speaks fluent Mandarin, Cantonese, and Hakka dialect and is truly an eloquent linguist. He has translated the "Three Peoples' Principles" and China's Destiny by using Annamese romanization. He is a returned student from Russia and has been imprisoned in Annam, Hongkong and China. At a time when he had financial difficulties he worked as a street hawker. Most successful revolutionists have experienced the same hardship and Ho is one of them. This has enabled him to devote his energy to the national revolution. He seized political power in August 1945. He lives the life of the plain people. He never seeks personal enjoyment and his only interest is in national revolution. Once he was asked, "When are you going to remarry? Since the Annamite Revolution has succeeded, isn't it time for you, as President of the Vietnam Government, to remarry?" His only reply was, "The day I remarry will be the day when I see Vietnam's complete independence." Like d'Argenlieu, when he goes out, he rides in a small car with only his secretary and bodyguards. On 31 May 1946 when he took a plane from Hanoi to France to attend a meeting, he brought as luggage, a small package of clothing, a pair of shoes and socks, and nothing else. This simplicity furnished comic material for the newspapers of Paris. Someone asked him: "How many times, and where, have you been in prison during the revolution?" He answered: "So often that I cannot remember but I have tried Chinese, French and British jails." At a time when his heart was moved, he spoke with tears and the audience wept with him. This is how he has won the support and respect of his people, especially farmers and laborers. Now there are three colonial leaders. They are Gandhi of India, Soekarno of N.E.I., and Ho of Indochina." (To be continued.)

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